

MIDWEST FLYER

MAGAZINE

APRIL/MAY 2018



Published For & By The Midwest Aviation Community Since 1978

Celebrating 40 Years

midwestflyer.com



The State of Minnesota provides this Technical Bulletin in the interest of Aviation Safety and to Promote Aeronautical Progress in the State and Nation.

Cassandra Isackson, Director

Dan McDowell, Editor

Minnesota DOT Office of Aeronautics
222 East Plato Boulevard • St. Paul, MN 55107-1618
651-234-7200 or (toll free) 1-800-657-3922

It's a new season!

by Cassandra Isackson

Director, Minnesota DOT Office of Aeronautics

Spring is here and summer isn't far away. This is a happy time of the year for many, especially after a long, cold, snowy winter. It is time to dust off the cobwebs, and get back into the flying mode. But first, do a thorough inspection of yourself as a pilot.

Are you truly ready to fly? Is your medical current? Have you checked with your doctor to be sure you can fly and will be safe if you take certain prescription medications? Are you mentally ready? Have you familiarized yourself with the latest Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs)? We want you to make safety your first priority in every aspect of your flying and your life. In other words, walk the talk.

Practice safe habits in everything you do. In fact, make sure you attend a general aviation safety seminar by going to faasafety.gov. If your EAA chapter, flying club, pilot association or other group would like a safety presentation at one of your meetings, call FAA Safety Team Program Manager Jay Flowers at 612-253-4418, or email jay.flowers@faa.gov.

Those of us at the MnDOT Office of Aeronautics are excited to be in our 75th year of operation and partnerships with our 135 public-use airports. They serve the general aviation community, as well as local communities. These quality facilities bring benefits to every citizen of the community, whether or not they are aviators. That makes your local airport a valuable asset to your community and surrounding area, as well as to the state of Minnesota. After all, the local airport is the front door to your community.

We are looking forward to a great spring and summer season of aviation events around the state and region. For example, the 2018 Minnesota Aviation Maintenance Technician Conference was held at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota on March 19 and 20th. Pilots attended this conference as well, especially those who like to do some minor maintenance on their own aircraft.



Cassandra Isackson

Coming up, we have the annual Minnesota Seaplane Pilots Association Safety Seminar & Fly-In, which will be held May 18-20, 2018 at Madden's Resort on beautiful Gull Lake in Brainerd. By the way, be sure to read Rachel Obermoller's seaplane article in this Technical Bulletin.

There are many more terrific aviation events all over the state. Just go to: www.dot.state.mn.us/aero/events to see the list we have. Check back often as we frequently add more events, dates and locations.

Enjoy the new season. Think safety first. Plan your flights well, and share your joy of aviation with young people. □



MINNESOTA DRONE DAY

ALL CURRENT AND FUTURE DRONE PILOTS
OF ALL AGES ARE WELCOME!

MAY 5, 2018 • 11am-3pm.



**BLACKHAWK MIDDLE SCHOOL
1540 DEERWOOD DR, EAGAN**

Start the day with drone demonstrations, simulators and food trucks. Stay for FPV flying, vendor tables, educational sessions and headline speaker, Kevin Morris of the FAA. Learn about the newest in drone technology, meet with hobby organizations, industry experts and speak with leading drone professionals.

TO REGISTER, VISIT MNDAC.ORG

Hosted by: 



Sometimes The Best Information Can't Be Found On The Internet

by Rachel Obermoller
Pilot, MnDOT Aeronautics



Rachel Obermoller

Ever show up at an event at the wrong time or with the wrong details? One of my fears, especially since becoming a parent and juggling work, home, school and kid schedules, is that my phone will ring someday with someone on the other end of the phone asking if I'm on my way. Between doctors and dentists, social engagements, organized events, and a work schedule that can have me flying early one morning and late the next night, I sometimes wonder how I manage to show up at the right time and place with the right family members in tow. I know part of our success is sharing my calendar with my husband and being diligent in entering appointments when I make them, but I also know that I'm a planner by nature and wired to deal with the details.

I like to research things: places to eat at our work trip destinations, fuel prices, transportation, and accommodation options. I read product reviews on Amazon, research the best diaper brand for the price, and know of several methods for getting a 3-year-old to follow instructions and baby to sleep through the night. (I'll let you know if I find one that works....) I've refined my research methods over the years, found the websites I like the best for my repeat queries, and know which friends to call or text for sage advice, a little humor, or a good recommendation.

One of the best research methods I use for flying destinations, however, is still the trusty telephone. For instance, want to know if an airport has a courtesy car? A quick call to the fixed base operator (FBO) or airport manager will answer the question. Want to know if someone will be available to fuel you, if they have a tall enough ladder (important information for some amphibious planes), or which hotels they recommend locally? Ditto for the FBO or airport manager. Want to know if anyone will deliver food on a quick fuel stop, what the runway condition is after a snow event when there's no NOTAM, or why the AWOS isn't currently reporting the visibility? Again, the FBO or airport manager will generally cheerfully steer you towards the answer.



The ramp at Grand Marais, Minn. (KCKC). A phone call to the airport will let you know in advance where to park for fuel and plug in your airplane preheater.



Not every seaplane base has the amenities so clearly marked and visible as International Falls (09I), so a phone call in advance is helpful to know where to find things.

I used to hesitate to pick up the phone to call the airport manager at times, thinking "Surely they're busy/don't want to answer a million questions/it isn't really that important." But you know what I've discovered over the past few years? Airport managers like getting the phone calls. They wish more people would pick up the phone and call before they visit. It helps them make sure the right information is in the pilot's hands. They can share relevant information about where you should park the plane, whether the courtesy car will be available, and what the conditions are at the airport. It helps them sell their airport and amenities, and to inform pilots about the things they can do for them and their passengers which they might not otherwise be aware of. For those airports where someone is in attendance, either working for the airport or the FBO, it lets them know why you're pulling up on the ramp, and what if anything you might need from them.

Ever show up at a busy FBO ramp and get marshalled somewhere miles from the front door, when all you need to do is pick someone up or get a quick fuel turn? I'll give you a hint. If you call ahead of time and tell them what's going on, chances are you'll end up a lot closer to the door, rather than perceived as an unknown intruder. I've worked at several busy FBOs over the years, and knowing who was coming and what services they might need helped us get them on their way faster, plan ramp space and parking better, and in general, provide superior service.

For *seaplane pilots*, this is all the more important to make the phone call. Airports are generally comprised of a swath of pavement or grass with established buildings and parking areas. I have yet to find a seaplane base anywhere near Minnesota where the seaplane and all obstructions on the lake are clearly marked or the most convenient parking spaces are painted with a yellow "T." The chart supplement doesn't always clearly communicate the fuel situation, ramp and parking provisions, or other amenities. The person who does know the answer is just a phone call away though.



Eveleth Sky Harbor Seaplane Base (9Y5)

The phone number for the airport manager is published in the FAA Chart Supplement (also known as the "Green Book," formerly the Airport/Facility Directory, and sometimes

still called the A/FD). Sometimes a secondary phone number will be published in the remarks as well, but beyond that, there's not much in the way of contact information available there. There are several websites and other directories which list FBOs and businesses at an airport or seaplane base. In Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Aeronautics publishes a handy book called the *Minnesota Airport Directory & Travel Guide*. Each address with a valid Minnesota aircraft registration receives a copy of the directory. We used to publish the directory in January, but now that we use aerial imagery for the directory, we aim to publish and mail the directory in February. This allows us to try to capture any changes from the previous year with more accurate aerial photos.

In our directory, you'll find the airport manager's phone number and email address, as well as a contact person listed. This might be an employee at the airport, the local FBO, or someone who has volunteered to answer questions people might have about the airport. At some Minnesota airports, the manager is an employee at city hall or in the public works department, so having another contact listed can be really helpful. Additionally, you'll find contact information for FBOs, businesses on the airport, information about courtesy cars and transportation, fuel, facilities for pilots and passengers, local dining, and lodging. It's not the only place, but a good place to start when you're looking for information about the local community.

To obtain a copy of the *Minnesota Airport Directory & Travel Guide*, the first and best place to look, where we keep the information current throughout the year, is our website, www.mndot.gov/aero. Click on the "Publications" tab and you'll find a link to the "Airport Directory" page. There are low resolution and high-resolution PDFs available there, which you can view online or download to your device and carry with you, instead of a printed publication. If you want a paper copy, you can also find a link to order one from us there. They are free of charge (one copy per person), and available until our inventory runs out during the year.

Recently, it's become rare for me to not make a call before I go somewhere. Whether it's for information gathering, or to inform the FBO of our plans, it's helpful for both parties and usually makes the trip much smoother. Plus, sometimes they tell us about a good new place to eat. Nobody likes a hungry pilot. □

MAC Turns 75 In 2018

The Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) marks its 75th anniversary in 2018, but the idea of creating a single government entity to own and operate Twin Cities' airports only came about with some diplomacy following years of spirited competition. Long

before MAC became the airport's owner and operator, air travel in the Twin Cities went through a series of boom-and-partial-bust periods. The Roaring 20s, the Great Depression and the build-up to World War II, all influenced the growth of what is now Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (KMSP), and to create a governing board to promote the growth of aviation in the Twin Cities. □